

Racism, sex abuse at school

Teachers complained to education MEC, but he refuses to meet them

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A JOBURG school has been rocked by allegations of financial mismanagement, racism and sexual abuse involving teachers, among other irregularities.

To worsen matters, the Gauteng Education Department has been accused of ignoring these cases at the school, leading to whistle-blowers being targeted by the school management.

Teachers at Queens High School in Kensington alleged that the school is selective in dealing with the misconduct cases and irregularities.

In a 37-page letter, the disgruntled teachers alleged that a male teacher took pictures of half-naked pupils, threw water in a Grade 11 pupil's face and used the K-word on another pupil. Another teacher is on suspension for assaulting a pupil.

Departmental spokeswoman Phumla Sekhonyane said they were aware of the allegations that a male teacher had sexually assaulted a female teacher. She said officials had launched an investigation into the matter and a team had been sent to the school.

She also confirmed that a female teacher who administered corporal punishment on a pupil so badly that he needed medical attention was found guilty and was suspended for two months without pay.

However, Sekhonyane said the department wasn't aware of the claims of a male teacher taking pictures of half-naked pupils. She encouraged pupils and parents to lodge complaints with the school.

"If parents of learners are dissatisfied with how the matter is dealt with at school level, they are welcome to escalate it

to the district or head office," she said.

Teachers complained that the school has, on several occasions, awarded big contracts to companies without going out to tender.

The teachers said they had asked Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi to conduct a forensic investigation into the affairs of the school, but they had not received any feedback. They also claimed Lesufi had refused to meet them to discuss the issues.

Among the reasons they are calling for a forensic investigation is because they claim the school management team give contracts to companies that are linked to their family and friends without following the proper procurement processes. They cited a R1.5 million CCTV security camera system installed at the school a few years ago. Last month, the school informed teachers that they were waiting for approval from the school governing body (SGB) before they could proceed with the installation of a "fingerprint technological system" costing R500 000.

The school also has housing facilities where staff members can be accommodated for a fee, but teachers claim this is done in a preferential manner. They claim a teacher and his family are accommodated in the principal's house on the property and run a business there without paying rent.

But Sekhonyane denied this and said the family do not live on the property but run a remedial centre there.

"She (the teacher) pays rental of R5 000 a month to the SGB. The rental of school property falls within the purview of the SGB," Sekhonyane said, adding that the department was taking the allegations at the school seriously.



IN VAIN: Members of the public wait outside the Randburg licensing department yesterday after being told that all services had been halted due to a strike by employees.

PICTURE: ANTOINE DE RAS

SA-built tankers pulled off British roads over compliance

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SOUTH African fuel tankers, built before 2010, are being removed from British roads after they failed to comply with internationally agreed regulations on safety.

The same tankers are sold across Africa. The announcement was made by the UK Department for Transport earlier this month after a £2 million (R43.8m) research programme tested the safety of the tankers and found that welding

cracks could lead to spillage in roll-over accidents.

The British announced in 2013 that the fuel tankers, manufactured by the Worcester-based company GRW and certified by Bureau Veritas SA, were not compliant with the European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR).

At the start of the investigation, there were 220 of these tankers on Britain's roads, which made up 15 to 20 percent of the country's fuel tanker

fleet. Detailed examinations of the tankers revealed that "lack of fusion indications may correspond to crack-like defects in the circumferential welds".

A report on an initial assessment of the tankers showed the circumferential welds might rupture under roll-over and ADR load conditions.

The British Department of Transport said in a statement that the tankers were first imported into the UK in 2006, and that there were about 70

would be withdrawn by the end of this month.

The department said new tankers from GRW had been certified as ADR compliant and were on the roads.

"The research has also shown that improvements could be made to the international regulations and the standards referred to therein to enhance the safety of fuel tankers in the event of a collision or roll-over incident," the department said in a statement.

GRW described themselves

as a "leading South Africa-based transport equipment designer, manufacturer and service provider of a wide range of sophisticated, cutting-edge road transport solutions" and said many of their tankers are on South Africa's roads.

Chief executive Gerhard van der Merwe said the company was the only non-European manufacturer of fuel tankers on UK roads, and he believed the investigation against their tankers began when it was noticed the compli-

ance was done in South Africa and not in the EU.

"Customers say they are the best tankers in the UK market, but it would be too expensive to fight the decision so we have agreed to trade in all the old tankers and replace them with new ones," Van der Merwe said.

The tankers which don't meet the UK standards are now being sold in Africa.

"We are now selling them to African countries," he said. He didn't say whether this included South Africa.

In role as plucky trapper, DiCaprio's hunt may be over

TOM LEONARD
Daily Mail

HIS WAS a tale of almost unimaginable grit and unspeakable gore. Ripped to shreds by a rampaging grizzly bear, the fur trader was left to die by his fellow trappers in the wilderness of the untamed American mid-West.

Hugh Glass had no weapon, no tools, no food and surely no chance of covering the 400km of icy rivers, predatory wildlife and hostile Indians that separated him from the nearest outpost of civilisation.

The fact that he not only made it, but then set off on an epic quest to avenge himself against the men who left him for dead, is one of the most extraordinary true stories of the American frontier.

Now, nearly 200 years later, Leonardo DiCaprio has taken on the role of that indomitable "mountain man".

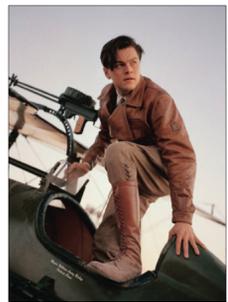
Not only has he taken on the challenge of recreating for the screen this tale of human endurance and embittered vengeance, but he is propelled by another motivation – to win an Oscar, something that has been denied to him four times.

Recent history shows Oscar glory often comes to actors who suffer for their roles. DiCaprio's preference for playing Wall Street spivs and pampered millionaires may have reinforced notions that he's a thespian of little depth.

Thus he has chosen the role of Glass – a portrayal already hailed by critics as "brutal".

The film, *The Revenant*, was made to be as realistic as possible. There was no computer graphic trickery and DiCaprio had to perform many of the shockingly gruesome stunts himself.

Almost unrecognisable under layers of blood, grime and wild hair, the actor bared himself to the elements, jumping into icy rivers and wading



HIGH FLYER: Leonardo DiCaprio as Hugh Glass in a scene from director Martin Scorsese's film *The Revenant*. PICTURE: AP

through waist-high snow.

In one scene, he rips out and eats a bison liver from its still warm body. In another, he guts a horse and crawls inside its carcass during a snowstorm.

"I was enduring freezing cold and possible hypothermia constantly," says DiCaprio. "I can name 30 or 40 sequences that were some of the most difficult things I've ever had to do."

Indeed, the episode of his mauling by a grizzly has been described by *Variety* magazine as "the most visceral scene of an animal attack on a human committed to the screen".

What's more, it's all based on a true story.

The real-life Glass – the son of Scots-Irish parents who had emigrated to Pennsylvania from Ulster – was the "old timer" among a grizzled group of mountain men who joined an 1823 expedition on the upper stretches of the Missouri River, in present-day South Dakota, to collect beaver skins through trade with friendly tribes.

It was a beautiful but wild land where few, if any, white men had ventured.

Hostile Indians had killed 17 of them, and Glass – a loner in his forties who insisted on



WILD WAYS: Leonardo DiCaprio as Jordan Belfort in *The Wolf of Wall Street*, based on the true story of the wealthy stockbroker.

PICTURE: PARAMOUNT / AP

camping apart from his companions – had been wounded with a musket ball in his thigh as he foraged.

He surprised a grizzly with her two cubs. The bear charged, picked up Glass by the throat and threw him to the ground. He shot her once and stabbed her with his knife, but she continued her attack.

Her three-inch claws made mincemeat of his flesh, shredding his scalp, face, chest, an arm, hand and leg. She tore off a mouthful of his flesh and lumbered back to her cubs. When he tried to escape, she attacked him again, biting deeply into his shoulder and chewing his back.

Glass's companions managed to kill the bear, her vast corpse crashing down on his

mangled body, a mass of blood and exposed flesh.

A savage rip in his throat left him unable to talk and he couldn't walk. His companions knew it was a miracle he'd survived. Tearing strips off their shirts to bind his wounds, they spent the night with him, certain he'd be dead by the morning.

But he wasn't. Expedition commander Major Andrew Henry put Glass in a stretcher, but with the threat from marauding Indians, he realised the invalid endangered the rest of the expedition. He left two men to stay with Glass until, they assumed, he'd die. They'd bury him and catch up with the rest of the party.

Five days later, he was still clinging on to life and the pair

became fearful of their chances of catching up with their comrades.

They took matters into their own hands, placing Glass beside a stream and rejoined the rest of the men, telling them Glass had died.

Unfortunately for him, they had taken his rifle, ammunition, knife, flint and steel otherwise they would have been told off for wasting such valuable equipment.

But Glass was as resourceful as he was tough.

His life had been a history of sheer pluck – captured by privateers in 1816, he spent two years as a pirate before escaping by swimming 3km to shore. He later lived with a Pawnee Indian tribe for two years, marrying a squaw and

earning renown and the name "White Bear" after he shot dead a huge grizzly.

Still delirious as he lay by the stream, he was able to reach for water and strip berries from an overhanging bush. A few days later, he woke to see a rattlesnake sleeping nearby and used a rock to kill it. He used the same stone to skin the snake and chop it into pieces small enough to get down his shattered throat.

Discovering he couldn't stand and had only one good arm and leg (the other was broken), Glass realised pursuing his companions would be impossible.

Wrapping himself in the pelt of the bear that had mangled him, he crawled downstream towards a French fur



'SO WE BEAT ON': DiCaprio as Jay Gatsby and Carey Mulligan as Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby*. PICTURE: WARNER BROS

trading post 400km away.

Remembering Pawnee ways, he dug roots and stole birds' eggs to eat. When he chanced on a buffalo carcass, he used a stick to fend off wolves and tucked into its vital organs.

Glass cleaned most of his wounds but he couldn't reach his back. He eventually managed by lying on a rotting log and used the maggots inside to eat his flesh before he contracted gangrene. His strength replenished by the buffalo meat, Glass fashioned a crutch and was able to hobble but the nights were starting to get bitterly cold.

Happily, he chanced on a group of Sioux Indians who tended his injured back and guided him on the final leg of his journey to the trading post.

There, Glass only stayed a day or two – desperate to catch up with the men who had abandoned him. He joined a new fur trapping expedition but this group was soon massacred by Arikaras Indians.

Ever the survivor, Glass was saved by another group of Indians, and set off west again, this time alone, hundreds of kilometres up the Yellowstone River.

Carving out snow-caves to shelter in at night and navigating through deep snow without a map, he caught up with his original expedition at new year, a lone figure lurching into their stockade gripping his rifle at the end of a 1600km journey.

When the walking scarecrow identified himself, their reaction can only be imagined.

Although Glass forgave one of the men who had deserted him after he apologised, he sought out the other, who had left the expedition and still had his treasured rifle.

Setting off in February 1824, he reached Fort Atkinson, in what is now Wisconsin, where he learnt the man who'd abandoned him had joined the US Army.

Confronting the trapper's commanding officer, Glass said he wanted his rifle back and intended to kill his betrayer.

Although the film version has a dramatic denouement, the reality was a let-down.

The officer warned Glass that, under US law, any civilian who killed an enlisted soldier faced being hanged. Glass had to settle for the return of his rifle and the knowledge he had shamed the man and warned him never to leave the army if he valued his life.

Glass returned to the ruggedly independent life of trapping and trading.

Typically, an arrow in the back failed to kill him.

But eventually, after so many attempts, the Arikara Indians did for him in 1833, ambushing Glass and two companions as they tramped down the frozen Yellowstone River.

His rifle was discovered in the possession of an Arikara; his body was never found.

If DiCaprio wins that Oscar, one hopes he'll do his character the honour of wearing his trademark bears' teeth necklace and fur hat for the award ceremony.

Strike closes licensing offices

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MOTORISTS and other people in Joburg were left frustrated yesterday after a strike by workers shut driver's licensing and testing offices.

Workers at the traffic department spent the day in a union meeting to raise their grievances over job positions that were advertised externally instead of internally, said metro police department spokesman Wayne Minnaar.

Carol Rundle, a pensioner trying to renew her licence in Randburg, was frustrated.

"I can't stand for hours in a queue," she said. "It's a problem to renew our licences now."

She had gone to renew her licence, which expires early next month, on Friday but found the employees were in a union meeting that morning. The office remained closed for the workers' Christmas party that afternoon.

At the Sandton office, people complained that it had been closed on Friday for a Christmas party as well.

Rundle's companion was also frustrated about renewing her licence, which expires this month.

"They can't penalise us if our licences expire," she said.

Signs at the Randburg licensing office said it would be closed until further notice but the signs at the Sandton office advised patrons to call the next day to see whether it had opened.

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